



NORTHEAST IDAHO

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON, & TETON COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

February's seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate for the Bonneville Labor Market Area (LMA) decreased two-tenths of a percentage point over the month to 3.7 percent as seen in Northeast Table 1. This was a decrease of five-tenths of a percentage point from February 2002. Bingham and Bonneville Counties each decreased three-tenths of a percentage point at 4.4 and 3.3 percent, respectively. Butte (5.3 percent) and Jefferson (3.9 percent) Counties both increased—four-tenths of a percentage point and one-tenth of a percentage point, respectively. Year-over-year, Bingham, Bonneville, and Jefferson Counties all saw decreases of four-tenths of a percentage point or more. Butte County was the only county to see an increase at one percentage point. Butte County experienced an increase of 15 unemployed persons and a decrease of 10 in the *Civilian Labor Force*.

Other counties in Northeast Idaho had little change over the month, with the exception of Clark County, which increased nine-tenths of a percentage point and Fremont County, which decreased seven-tenths of a percentage point. Custer County experienced the largest decrease year-over-year from 10.5 percent to 7.4 percent. The Thompson Creek Mine closure had an effect on last year's unemployment rate. Clark and Lemhi Counties both decreased substantially year-over-year at 1.4 percentage points and 1.1 percentage points, respectively. (See State Table 1 on page 3 for county labor force rates.)

Jobs by Place of Work show that total nonfarm jobs decreased by 160 over the month with *Service-Producing Industries* losses overriding gains in *Goods-Producing Industries*. The industry that showed the largest gain (60) was *Government Education* as spring semesters started up in January and fed into the need for more employment by February. All significant losses were seen in the *Service-Producing Industries* with 110 from

Northeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Bonneville, Bingham, Butte, and Jefferson Counties

	Feb 2003*	Jan 2003	Feb 2002	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	82,910	84,202	83,770	-1.5	-1.0
Unemployment	3,090	3,307	3,520	-6.6	-12.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.7%	3.9%	4.2%		
Total Employment	79,820	80,895	80,250	-1.3	-0.5
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	80,750	82,310	82,330	-1.9	-1.9
Unemployment	3,810	3,970	4,150	-4.0	-8.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.7%	4.8%	5.0%		
Total Employment	76,940	78,340	78,180	-1.8	-1.6
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	60,990	61,150	60,100	-0.3	1.5
Goods-Producing Industries	9,030	8,960	8,550	0.8	5.6
Natural Resources & Mining	50	50	50	0.0	0.0
Construction	3,750	3,710	3,440	1.1	9.0
Manufacturing	5,230	5,200	5,060	0.6	3.4
Food Manufacturing	2,690	2,730	2,880	-1.5	-6.6
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	290	290	240	0.0	20.8
Machinery Manufacturing	470	440	390	6.8	20.5
Other Manufacturing	1,780	1,740	1,550	2.3	14.8
Service-Producing Industries	51,960	52,190	51,550	-0.4	0.8
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	13,850	13,920	14,120	-0.5	-1.9
Wholesale Trade	4,750	4,710	5,050	0.8	-5.9
Retail Trade	7,280	7,390	7,460	-1.5	-2.4
Utilities	100	100	100	0.0	0.0
Transportation	1,720	1,720	1,510	0.0	13.9
Information	830	870	930	-4.6	-10.8
Financial Activities	1,970	1,950	2,050	1.0	-3.9
Professional & Business Services	11,350	11,470	11,190	-1.0	1.4
Educational & Health Services	6,210	6,180	5,750	0.5	8.0
Leisure & Hospitality	4,530	4,670	4,500	-3.0	0.7
Other Services	2,250	2,220	2,240	1.4	0.4
Government Education	5,140	5,080	5,150	1.2	-0.2
Government Administration	5,830	5,830	5,620	0.0	3.7

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

Retail Trade (General Merchandise and Building & Garden Supplies sectors), 120 from Professional and Business Services (Administrative & Support & Waste sector), and 140 from Leisure & Hospitality (Food Services & Drinking Places sector).

Year-over-year, the LMA experienced a total increase of 890 jobs in spite of the national and state economies. The increase came almost equally from both the *Goods-Producing Industries* and the *Service-Producing Industries*. *Construction* showed a notable increase of 310 as the area continues to thrive with new developments, both commercially and residentially. *Educational & Health Services* increased 460 jobs with equal participation from the *Ambulatory Health Care Services* and *Hospitals* sectors. *Government Administration* increased 210 jobs in *Local Administration*. Decreases were seen

in *Food Manufacturing (Fruit & Vegetable Preserving & Special Foods)*, *Wholesale Trade (Nondurable Goods)*, and *Retail Trade* (mostly *General Merchandise* stores). Both *Food Manufacturing* and *Wholesale Trade* are related to potato activity in a month when temperatures can drop so low that transportation of the commodity is restricted, limiting working hours in the day.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

- The Department of Energy (DOE) named a new leader for the Idaho National Engineering & Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) in March. Elizabeth Sellers, currently the manager at DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration in Kansas City, was chosen after a year-long search. During this year, INEEL's mission changed, so the qualifications of the job changed mid-stream. Sellers, who will oversee day-to-day operations at the INEEL, has experience in environmental cleanup and national security programs. DOE and Sellers will now look for a deputy manager to replace Warren Bergholz who recently retired from the position.

Bonneville County

- Two established businesses experienced tragedy within the past two months in Idaho Falls. BMC West, a building supply company and lumberyard, lost its retail sales/office building at the end of February in a fire. Fortunately, the lumberyard was saved and employees were able to operate out of the sales building east of the building that was destroyed. The company will either rebuild or change locations. Damage was estimated to be at least \$1.3 million. Bubba's Bar-B-Que caught fire at the end of January during a prime dinner time. The fire damaged a few sides and some of the roof of the building. The owners have already started rebuilding and plan to reopen Memorial Day weekend. No one was injured in either fire.
- The Tautphaus Park Zoo in Idaho Falls received a \$400,000 donation from ALSAM Foundation, a Boise-based philanthropic group. The money will help the zoo expand its Primate Discovery Center (monkeys and apes) and its otter exhibit. Construction is expected to be completed in 2004.
- A second AutoZone, Inc. will open in Idaho Falls at the corner of Woodruff Avenue and Seventeenth Street. The auto parts retailer will start construction in May where tenants Clear Channel Communications and Herbs for Health (along with others) now exist. The current retail complex will be torn down and those business will relocate elsewhere in the city. AutoZone, Inc. offers free testing for batteries, starters, alternators, voltage regulators, and control modules. Used engine oil can be taken there for re-

cycling. The store also offers a Loan-A-Tool program for customers who need specialty tools for one-time repair jobs. The company's other Idaho Falls location is at 1562 West Broadway Avenue.

- Walgreens in Idaho Falls will get new neighbors at its Holmes Avenue and Seventeenth Street location. Rent-A-Center, which specializes in renting furniture and household items, and a check-cashing service will be the first two tenants. Construction will begin as soon as permits have been issued.

Madison County

- North America's largest franchised lawn-care company, Weed Man, is opening a location in Rexburg. Jerry Merrill, who currently runs Merrill Quality Landscapes and U.S. Lawns and Nite Time Décor, will provide services to both residential and commercial customers from Shelley to Ashton with his Weed Man franchise. The company started in Toronto in 1970 and currently has 135 unit franchises in the United States and 133 unit franchises in Canada.
- Joel Huber and Greg Gasper opened Upper Valley Lock and Safe at 20 North First West in Rexburg. The locksmith shop is located across the street from Broulim's in the garage of the rock house located at that address. The owners hope to attract foot traffic from university students, along with steady resident clients as the town continues to expand.

Teton County

- Warmth Wear, makers of adult footed pajamas and other items, has grown substantially since sisters started making them in the basement of their mother's Newdale home in 1996. The company moved from the basement to an apartment above a Teton convenience store when the Internet proved to be a good marketing avenue. Most of the product is sold to customers in the eastern and the southern parts of the United States, and the majority of the customers are men. The website, www.warmthwear.com, includes photos and descriptions of the products, such as drop-seaters or "mooners" and "cozies" styles.

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